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Bard

= = = = =

Nothing came of that
we must imagine beginning
and unwind it forward from that.

After a long time
there'll be enough line
to let it trail in the sream

like a trickle of maybe blood—
see if anything catches hold of it.

2.
A stream doesn't have to be water.
Time, wind, experience, even conversation
all know how to stream at us,

strike us, pass.
Rocks in the stream:
that's what it means to be.

1 December 2016

= = = = =

**When we say mind
we mean a different thing
from what the grass does
when it rouses the thought
to grow or go to sleep.
We call it thinking, they
call it being. Mind
pervades, All the rest
is our vocabulary.**

1 December 2016

= = = = =

**Is it summer or winter?
The mind can't tell
sometimes, lost in a weather
of its own. Or found.
Safe on the new
island of its awareness
all by itself, and all
the raw materials at hand.
Talk about things
until they are there.
Here. Now begin
to unravel the particulars
out of the obvious.
An angry informant
points to the door.**

1 December 2016

= = = = =

**Anonymous participation
is best. You don't
know who you are anyhow.**

**Conversations have thick accents.
Sticks and stubble? Milkweed
did this to me I used to suck**

**I taste it still, Nostrand Avenue
And Avenue U where the trolley
cars turned back north.**

**Where the heart was bound—
now find the herb a leaf has
a blade to cut it free.**

1 December 2016

= = = = =

**Allow the words
to thicken over winter,
yield a tough resin
you can chew all spring**

**until the meanings
start to sprout up—
one morning they'll be
even maybe a flower.**

**Or a leaf you can eat.
Amazing patience
need for such chemistries:**

**tie a string around a book
and lick the knot
to make it wet and tight.**

1 December 2016

= = = = =

How the few
tremble, wind
makes a thyrsus
of this lone
yet-leafed bush
shades my, scrapes
my window.

Some days it seems
that everything is praise—

unfaltering sunlight
hear me now.

2 December 2016

= = = = =

**He prays praise.
Pope enough
for any chapel.
The word meant
father once and who
will be so now?
Wifeless Christians,
roll nack the stone!**

2 December 2016

= = = = =

The hope should be
something from your mother's
kitchen years ago,
your own mother's, not a stranger's—
an egg-beater maybe
that you could use still
to stir up a storm of wind,
a little storm in local air,

and it will blow the trucks
right off the block, bring
stray sea-birds inland so
they rest on your roof, there,
by the chimney, a pelican,
a gannet laughing on the garage!

And you will be you again,
innocent as snow,
all over town voices getting
ready to call your name.

2 December 2016

= = = = =

Given time, the river
takes everything away.
Don't name it — rivers hate
the stupid names we give them,
prosaic, romantic, phony Indian,
all wrong. Rivers neers need no names.

They are all one water.
And they are the dragons you read about
in stories from Germany or China,
crazy slow twisting creatures
that swallow maidens alive.
They leave us to our clay and marble temples—
leave them alone, let them be, let them go.

2 December 2016

= = = = =

**The light of anybody
is somebody else.**

**That's why we sleep
to gve the other a chance
to shine his flashlight
into our dark souls
so both of us grow.**

**Grow wise. The other
is the only light around.
In her glow we see stars,
wake up, and wake
matter also with our cries,
our whys, our musics
and give all the verbs
all the nouns they need.**

2 December 2016

= = = = =

**Dormitions interrupted
by rodentia. Vocabulary
brittle, crackles
in the night, fissures
let old stuff in. Wake.**

**A mouse woke me — yes,
there are mice in winter
they come in, into strange houses
the way we scurry south
to timeshares in Florida.**

**So here we all are,
displeased with one another,
lacking the means and thank
heaven the will to kill.**

3 December 2016

= = = = =

**Have I said enough
on that topic
or does the weather
have to make its
appearance now?**

**Woke. The astern sky
was full of something
over and beyond the trees
that must be light.**

3 December 2016

= = = = =

**Delicate operation:
the clamor
of a woman's shape
passing through
memory. Only
the form of her
enough.**

3 December 2016

= = = = =

**That the soul
is present
in every moment
of the body,**

**can be detected
by the wise.
That the mind
knows always**

**where it's been.
Enough.
Sometimes saying
something is sacrilege.**

3 December 2016

= = = = =

**Don't sleep stay
awake until
you fall there—
that is the
geuine sleep.**

3.XII.16

= = = = =

Now the light has come
through all the trees

close now, here
we can almost see.

Nothing on the field
but field. Money

hasn't awakened yet.
It is beautiful to be

awake when it is not.

3 December 2016

NEUROLOGY

**He listened
into his tinnitus
and what he found there
was another person
also being him,**

**a lost brother
or just a stranger
altogether, from
Slovenia maybe
a man acquainted
with rivers, cities,
dragons, ravines,
someone who never
spoke because
so much was being
said already
and he's the first
listener of all.**

3 December 2016

TO THE RIVER JORDAN

**Dear Jordan,
 you have flowed
between my imagination of a self
and of a world to self around in,**

**desert and city, until I've lost
all meaning — as you have too,
except 'it flows, it runs down.'**

**2.
I never thought it was the Bible—
poems and alarms, kings and sorcerers—
I thought there was some other book,
his wives read from it to Solomon
every night for a thousand nights
and then began again. That's what
a wife is for, to know the truth
and tell it to him again and again
with the long muscles of her will.**

**3.
One day I learned — don't ask how,
blue sky, busy street, midtown—
I had to write that book myself.
Rivers told me nothing but they helped**

**me learn to go on praying. To say
is to pray. Say it clear as I can
then listen hard in case it answers.
Something answers.**

4.

**So every stream
becomes you, rivers are just divisions,
silver separations, a blade to keep
the self and the other far apart.**

5.

**How did I let myself
come so far inside?
I wanted to stand right
there in your flow
around me, through me,
I wanted to be baptized
by everything that ever
was spoken, so I could be
the son of all that saying.**

6.

**How funny children are
in what they want and always
they get it, always,
the world is shaped for that.**

That is what flowing means.

4 December 2016

TO A SCHOLAR IN JERUSALEM

**Emma, I wanted to write a poem
translated by ear from the Latin
marriage service in the Missal.
I tried not to know what the words
'really' mean but that's hard,
Latin feels like my native language,
but I tried, I tried just to hear
the worlds as if they were English,
homeophonic poetry, risky, silly,**

**I wanted to make it like a *ketubah*,
the almost unreadable ornate
marriage contract, for some friends.
Do you have one hanging in a closet
or shyly on the bedroom wall?**

**Charlotte and I were married Methodist
but by a friend. No ceremony.
no poem wrought from ancient tongues,
just us. What was I after with my Missal,**

did I want to catholic my Jewish friends
or find deep in the mass its Jewish roots,
the rabbi who started all of it?
Not even Catholics know Latin
anymore. But you and your love
and we. we know still what
unum caro means and how it says
something all religions try to ignore.
If there's a God, wouldn't
God be one flesh with us?

4 December 2016

= = = = =

**“Give me back my storm”
she meant, but she was calm.
but her hair was wet
her coat drenched.
Indoors was too obvious,
too easy. Made afraid.
Our talk was of ghosts
and how the living can appear
in one another’s dreams
or sometimes even
in the shadows
of the waking mind. Our minds.
Too much talk. Too much inside.
She hurried back into the healing rain.**

4 December 2016

= = = = =

for T.P.

The thing about guessing games, they must be simple, the answer must be right there, a given a gift to you like a stranger's warm smile. You have to know the answer before the question is asked Your own smile (no one can see his own smile) starts the game, and lets the other know it's time to ask. Can you guess what's in my pocket? Can you guess the name of my only child? What did the wolf find under the snow? Or in a dark room, with your eyes closed, can you tell me is it snowing yet?

5 December 2016

= = = = =

1.

Headlights show through the curtains
like a bird of two flying by.
Night and day I work so hard
to make you happy
it says outside, the world,
cosmos, whatever you call it,
everything.

2.

Leporello
(little bunny, little hare)
his variation in the Diabelli suite
comes to, calls to,
mind.

Night and day I work so hard
Room in a hotel, that's what this is,
a room with rooms in it and trees
and streets and seas in it,
a room. Night and day
it hums to make you happy.

3.

Beethoven loved to wait by the gate
to see who would come when the music
stopped. Berlioz fled across the plains
to hide from what the music wrought.

Notte e giorno faticar he
sings in German,
enslaved by pleasure,
our pleasures, always,
all the variations,
creatures of habit.

We are music.

5 December 2016

= = = = =

**Is there room in the sky
for all of it, man and mercy,
Mongolia, steel works , songs
of a dreary commerce, camels?**

**Camels need the sky.
Amethysts, Agate crystals
left on the beach by you,
sea. Your names now,
is there room in the sky
for all our names**

**and still leave space
for flocks of birds to river through
on their way to a country
we will never enter,
other side of the sky?**

5 December 2016

**Or is there another *turn*
like the belly of a lute,
an oud, an ox-bow on the river,
your fingers curled beside your plate?**

**We say it's my turn now,
so turn is waiting
for the right time
and being there for it,
doing it,
like a river. A river always does.**

5 December 2016

= = = = =

Admiring the obvious
when it takes the form of snow
new-fallen
not so bad.

The aesthetics
of the evident
have yet to be studied
by some laborious Aristotle.

Are we to love best
things that last
or things that vanish,

banish us from their sight,
smell of lilacs,
breeze over water,
tears in your eyes?

5 December 2016

DE RE METALLICA

1.

**The metal is the miracle.
There is in copper a kabbalah
the way spacetime bends
around the talking stars
faithfully reflected in
this redshift metal. Or gold
soft too, my ring bends in my fingers
as if bone were a better stone
everything is spelled correctly in the earth
but we yank out one letter at a time
it takes forever to get
that simple sentence straight
tthe Original Text.**

**Start digging now. The ore
is waiting. Try to hear it as it lies
the snore of vast aluminum through all the ground.**

2.

**I forgot I never told you about the talking stars.
Not all of them. Some send images, some moods,**

some nothing at all we know about yet. Yet.
But the talking ones (*stellae eloquentes*)
send down continuous chatter, like rabbis
davening or lamas chanting, *the words*
are softer than the tones, the drone
says all, my sweet Manx miss, my Mongol,
naso-pharyngeal whistle verbs, my Cherokee.

3.
I regularly translate from a language unknown
to me and anybody else as far as I can tell
but publish the resulting texts as My Own Work.
I wonder how long it will be before people catch on.
(They still haven't twigged John Keats's
preposterously beautiful verses from Old Indigo).

4.
Metals tell.
Metals told me this.
I am grateful
for every ion.
The maneuver
comes to the hand
that waits empty.
Gibbet at the crossroads
critique enough.

**Villon's tarnished silver
bite in to show the bright.**

**5.
I predict they will find a metal
someday more common than milk
and rarer than rainbows,
a metal that will come when we call
and slip between the sheets at night
to protect us from dream, I predict
the metal will be silvery yellowy pink
and warm in your hands, it will turn
all other metals into whatever is in your mind
when you look at them a certain way.
You have to learn the way. The metal
will do everything but teach you that.
When you leave it alone on a plate
or a shelf in the cupboard, it will smell
like grain and even look like a distant
wheat field at sunrise. You know the one,
you went there once with someone
you loved at the time but now aren't sure.
All you really remember is the wheat
shushing back and forth in the dawn wind.**

5 December 2016

= = = = =

**Every line says
all by itself**

**no furniture needed
we dream on air
bed like birds**

**(over Sade's castle
swallows unsleeping)**

**glad in the hovering
hurry heaven
the way we do.**

6 December 2016

= = = = =

**Tried hard
to be a singer
but my hands
get weak,
caan't climb
the *scandicus*
my eyes can't
reach, fall
back on common
tone. To see
is sing enough
maybe. As to breathe
is to make sense.**

6 December 2016

= = = = =

**Write big
so barristers
can read your lies
and quote them
convincingly
to any jury.**

**That's what
a book is
or magazine,
you're on trial
for your life,
your words
the only evidence.**

6 December 2016

= = = = =

**Little traces
of erasure,
I am a pelican
could that really
be what he meant,**

**every word a wound
from which something flows
that teaches and heals?
Could he have meant
that self-inflicted clarity?**

6 December 2016

= = = = =

**Windows and doors
are all there are.**

7.XII.16

DAUGHTER

a daughter
is a doer,
a double, a door.

thygater, you
“too got her”

you give her
love and leasings
(lyings) like the pulse
on her pink tongue tip
when she fibs,

or asks
“am I you yet?”

Interesting, be
you in another body—
tell her

Sanctity waits at the door
you’re baptized by rain
a little trickle runs
down your spine
and suddenly you’re Palestine.

I can't believe the answers
the questions must be wrong,
a daughter is the only reason,
a rapture, a road
I don't know what it is,

if there were no daughters
who would prick the sky with stars
or slash the furtive veilings of its tent?

hey do it all
with doubt and loneliness,
doubt gives them power
to cut through

and their distrust
empowers you both.

And if you saw your mother dancing
wouldn't you?

7 December 2016

GRETCHEN AM SPINNRAD

Moan,
 at the spinwheel
wretched, the work
of more is never
done.

 Believe
a wall when it stands,
it means it
more than words can say,

scribble on it
venceremos! all the subtle
sudden sodden itchy
love left on your skin,

the work is never done,
the flax is always,
the thread unbroken—

no holidays
in heaven,

beauty suffers
us to go on,

**the privilege
of a wall,**

**a woman spinning
linen, cotton,**

**so we put on
a coat of leaves
and seeds and blossoms,**

**shabby as Eden
but very clean.**

7 December 2016

ADVENT

**I tried to wait for you
but the spoon ... well,
you know what spoons like to do,
and the rain trickled down your back
I tried to follow it but the eyes
saw something in the forest
they followed. That was she.
There is a name for her in the country
another in town. She sweats
like any other mortal but the smell
thereof be lavender and clove.
Thieves run from it, and leave
my tomb unransacked and alone.**

2.

**I tried to tell you the truth for once
about the island you come from and forgot,
the ones you married one way or another
but always came back. That's what an Iliad
really for instance is bout: they come home,
they always come back. You stand there
saying nothing and I understand. Hair
plays with the wind. Light comes between us
and caresses us both, safe, simultaneous!**

The ship is entering the harbor as we speak.

3.

**O dilly-dally so much to November
and now it's next month and the yule
is snorting in the woods, soon soon
it swoons us all together in a mess
of feasting, religion and contrition
and a gas log in the fake fireplace—
love has had to make do with less
and now The Good Thief comes, brings
back all he's ever stolen, not just from us,
no, all the world's impedimenta
fill his sack he gushes out for me me me.
If I can name it I can have it. If I have
no word for it it vanishes and both of us
leave the interaction lighter, fresher,
but lingers long a hint of lavender.**

7 December 2016

ALBA

When it goes from black to grey
you know it's coming.
Dirty as a day! the Irish say—
it lies on its belly
barebacked to the sky.
Breath by breath
hushes down the spine,
a soft exhale at every bone
until breath reaches bottom
and the light begins.
Breath brings the day in clean.
On us now the growing senses
devolve the obligation,
the oldest one. Begin
again and het it right this time.

8 December 2016

A STATUE FROM ITS FOUTAIN PARTED

Soft the breeze
from the girl
to the garden
once a long
time back, *la*
Baigneuse de
Blithewood

an image
something the light
brings in,
thought
impaled, lift
what you want
to do to
what is done
already,
 sun
and sunflower
raccoon kettle
lavender, all
stones—

an anthology
of dirt

pricked
by raindrops,
read your lady's
letteing, peer
below, letter
by letter
shivering ballads
plucked string
tinny sound
of fall leaves
copied clear,
stumble.

Fall.

It's the way
fire taught you,
torture elements
into form,
all
chemistries
seize this
truth —

you
thought was a lute
licking
heard hard

to sleep
with her hand
cradling cheek,
amorphous
dream drivell
as if horror
made me be
here metal
there skin,

all stone
to begin with
anyhow still,
her jagged rituals
again to touch
which into motion
or to still?

O sun my
semaphore
spell me
right this one
time, grasses,
ivies, rivers
follow.

8 December 2016

MORWENING

Ravenous one wakes,
a line of Shakespeare tooting him
out of almost sleep.

To a hungry man the world is food,
to a silent mind the world is word
he yearns to hear.

Tell me tell me
tell me Elm! his teacher sang
when he was infancy—

and shamefast he listens still
to every piece of woods or wolf
or woman most, or whoever
lets some sense of meaning out,
and every stone a stool where wise men chat.

8 December 2016

QUESTING, 1

Catch the other first
the side that faces Mercury
when it casts its tiny shadow
on the powder long ago prepared
you swallowed and sweated out and now
lies before you like a thin sheet of silver
with that shallow shadow on it.

Wake up! It is science calling
from all the stupid books you read
that made you wise, and contrariwise,
wakeup and open up your door,
the animal is standing there
panting from the journey
and his rider beside him, her fur
glistening around her cheeks, eyes
closed, already dreaming you.

Go out to them. Your house
is gone the minute you leave it,
you are alone with beast and bride,
it is summer there and the rain mild,
you lead one another across the plains
days it seems but only hours pass
and then you're there, all of you at last,

the parchment wigwam, the leaden tower,
the pool of heirloom water, the little
footbridge to the island made of glass.
And there you finally all sleep.
I saw an old painting once
that shows the silk pavilion
where you rest, gold-helmeted
soldiers guard you, old priest
is reading by candlelight,
trying for once to finish his prayers
before he too is swept away by sleep.
Sleep n Mercury's faint light,
clutch his tenuous shadow.
This is the first day of the journey.

8 December 2016

FOR STEVEN HOLL

**The architect is everywhere.
So many solutions
to no problem, like poetry.**

**Imagine a house, walk in.
Your shadow leads the way
mornings. That sort of house.**

**Tilt the floor a little
away from the moon,
you're man enough for house**

**woods highway storm cloud
churchbell in the dining room
the sea-sunken bed.**

**Sometimes number theory
is an agony,
five miles in another's shoes,**

**your shadow scrapes the floor
you know it knows things
you'll never tell**

**no critic knows—
the way a shadow breaks
at the first stair step**

**a simple bird
bounces off a window
stunned flies away.**

**This is what a house must be
the rule of three
divided by eternity**

**we have to know it
to let it go,
a house too is stunned**

**by where it stands,
wake it
with revelry and prose,**

**hibiscus, spandex,
the swimming pool
must have no shape**

**but water alone,
you have it all now,
have her in your arms,**

**the form of water
wakes up the mind.
You build of light—**

footsteps follow.

9 December 2016

= = = = =

In my
dream she

told me
she walked

once naked
alone along

the beach
near Haifa

midnight
moonlight

and finally knew
how right I am:

the mon *is*
a man

and wanted her,
she gave

**him all
a woman can.**

9 December 2016

QUESTING, 2

Go on the Venus Highway then
the smoky roadhouse
where your mother learned to dance
and learned it was good to be bad
in her own pious way

and why am I holding you in my heart
like a surgeon tying a tourniquet on an artery?
who has wounded us this way
so that we turn away from each other
as when the sun's too strong on our faces
and we should be hurrying into the Copper Land
where love turns itself and all things green?

No wound but the mirror.

From the cold crucible chip out
three flakes of what was formed therein,
put one under your tongue and hold
the others in each hand. See,
the shadow does begin to form,

a shape you can almost name
shimmers into being across the room

**Throw the left hand flake at it—
it moans and gets more physical,
now throw the right hand and
the shadow suddenly has eyes.
Now spit the last flake at it
and at last the shade begins to speak.
Hurry to your stupid desk
and write down every word it says —
they aren't words but you think they are,
at least get something written down.
For the next thousand years
till next morning this is your bible,
I kneel before you and beg
you to share these vague instructions with me.
These guesses are our true religion.**

9 December 2016

= = = = =

**Screechy prisoners
in a bad time
shouting slogans
to or at each other—**

**there must be better
for words to do,
wave or fountain
clean and new.**

10 December 2016

SATURDAY

**Saturn is the lord
of harvest,**

**reap the wheat
pluck the grapes**

**breasts
show through the bodice,**

**the wedding bells
toll winter in—**

**when will we
two begin?**

10 December 2016

= = = = =

**Stubble on the chin:
looking for trouble.**

**Archaic weather
the heart knows best.**

10.XII.16

= = = = =

**We live still
in antiquity,
the emperors just
change their language
change their clothes.**

**If Rome fell
we are where it toppled to,
our never-ending circus,
innutritious corn.**

10 December 2016

= = = = =

The oral chamber
the remember—

know the trees
by the taste of thee

the lost one, the amber
from Latvia,
the bag of peppermints
left in the car—
will the ants find them
before time ends?

I swallowed and I said—
that;'s all ever did and do,
my work, practice, doom.

I swallowed a wheat field
and spoke a flock of crows.

10 December 2016

QUESTING, 3

Sweeping done by asteroid
and laundry done by light alone
the measureless path
inches closer to some moonless orb
(what a word!). I heard him
talking Danish with the air,
it answered hm in some dialect
She spoke on Bornholm
three thousand years ago
give or take on afternoon
swimming in the Elbe with her friends.
How far *now* seems from *real*,
true sensations, wet skin,
roasted hazelnuts, the tribe's astronomer
spread legged in the shifting sand
counting the horizon. The wise
see the one as many, and the many one.

10 December 2016

QUESTING, 4

To be perplexed is a small planet
sometimes orbiting between M and V
(the esoteric meanng of 1005)—
who reigned then in your Saxon heart,
your Irish fields of turf hummocky
in morning sun? Truth is an animal.
Strong, seldom fierce, it licks you
because the taste of you (and you)
is what truth feeds on—the knowledge
that it is known by us and in us
embodied. No bite is necessary.
Even the moon is optional. Just me
(you) truth and the Sun herself
reigning over the daughters of ocean
our mothers. Not in the picture
but safe below the saline layers
in that strange airy house at the bottom
of everything. You've done Mercury
now, and Venus, now you have to solve
that equation with three unknowns.
Hard. Toss a string into the sky and let it
catch the legendary diamond rain drop—
every day She lets one fall, I mean the Sun.

10 December 2016

NIGHT MERE

**Bad dreams bad waking
the insolence of night**

**when dark knows
how to make noises
and no one walks
with heavy footsteps
through lightless rooms.**

**You call this home
but dream it away,
in strange bedrooms
strangers in all
their terrible loveliness.**

10 / 11 December 2016

= = = = =

**Bless me, Mother,
for I have forgotten
how to sleep.
I can confess it to you
in the dark chapel,
the only dark I know.**

**I close my eyes
see markets of images
unknown cities
crowded rooms
busy with laughter
posing playing
teasing, how terrible
it is to play.
Always with strangers,
never with anyone know.**

10 / 11 December 2016

= = = = =

Count the steps
noises an empty
house makes,

matter rousing,
growling, restless
around me,

saying things.
The air in the hall
walked into the room,

I heard it,
stopped breathing
but it still came in,

all last night
had to hear
the footsteps of things.

MANNER OF THE CRIME

**He sent certain images
into her mind.
Poison pictures
she had to be awake to fight.
She barely made it—
stood at the window
waited for dawn,
she clutched the curtain,
could hardly breathe.**

10 / 11 December 2016

= = = = =

**Now they tell me —
it's good for the eyes
to read a lot.
Seventy years of guilt
not easy to wash away.
Especially with glaucoma.**

10/11.XII.16

= = = = =

**You know you're in trouble
when you start taking
the weather personally.
Next step: every person you meet
has a fixed opinion of you
you can't decipher. Next day
a mysterious letter
comes in the mail addressed
to OCCUPANT your address.
And you know it's really you.
Fall in love. Get out of town.**

11 December 2016

QUESTING, 5

Quest began as question.
A question you ask with your
whole body, planetary body
between Venus and Mars—
Earth is Hephaestus, tries
to keep those lovers apart,
we are crippled by love and war—
principles not unknown
to other species, angels,
whales, mountains. But we
are their *parents and originall*,
humans created all this stuff,
we limp from couch to battlefield,
beating our brothers with bats
stabbing our sisters with scissors,
you know the story, you too
were a child once. This is all very
theoretical, we'll get back
to images soon as the projector
comes back from the shop
and the girl who runs it comes
back from her snow date in Canada.

11 December 2016

= = = = =

I don't know when I got on the bus.
Lots of empty seats but a woman
in bluejeans has been standing
by the rear exit for blocks and blocks,
never pulls the buzzer, never gets off.
We're crawling along Sutter Avenue
in the dark, all the stores are closed,
even the corner bar on Stone is dark.
A long black sleeve pulls the cord,
a rabbi. he gets up, gets off with bundles
at the next stop. Red light, the bus stands
long after the rabbi disappears.
He seemed to look disapprovingly
at the woman as he edged past her to
step down onto the exit treadle.
Maybe it was my imagination.
Why is she standing there? If
she's still there when I get off
I'll ask her. But where do I get off?
Where am I going. We're on Pitkin
now, a word that occurs only here
and in Pound's first Canto. Dark

store fronts here, everything closed,
only the traffic lights are still alive,
and a few cars pass. And our bus
with falf a dozen people still on it.
The woman still at her post, her back
still turned to me, I begin to be afraid
what face I'll see if she turns round,
maybe I won't ask her anything.
Street even darker now. We've come
to the end of the line. Even the big
cafeteria is closed, and the nightclub
across Eastern Parkway dark. The woman
is the first one off. She hurries away
under the trees, past the benches where
silent old people are sitting. I never
had to see her face. get off too,
what else am I supposed to do.
I sit on a bench, an old couple inch
an inch away, sign of courtesy,
plenty of room. It's not cold,
not hot. The bus turns off its lights,
the driver has vanished. Squirrel
under he empty bench across from us
or is it a rat. They come big round here.
I think I am a long time ago now
but a man sitting on a bench, hard
to tell, could be anytime, anywhere

**even though I'm here. I need
to think about something, thought
can ground the feelings, think
about the woman on the bus,
imagine a gallery of faces for her,
races, ages, colors, attitudes.
I decide she's Slavic, cheekbones,
eyebrows darker than her hair,
grey eyes but her eyes are closed.**

11 December 2016

= = = = =

Could she ever be mistaken
who thought to gather
flowers in the snow — blue
hydrangea from Nepal
maybe, plumeria from Oahu —
and there they were,
ready for her hand, the snow
shy of such color. One
had a strong sweet smell,
lecherous even and welcoming,
the other hardly any, freshness
mostly, like the smell of the sky.

11 December 2016

= = = = =

**The ethnology of running in snow
and falling deliberately
backward to make angels
under a grey sky barely dawn
flapping the arms to make wings
up first or down first: which
moiety, tribal custom, handedness,
stratification. And some
wont even let themselves fall.**

12 December 2016

= = = = =

**The snow makes
everything look close
and hard to get to.
That is why art
developed in the north.**

12 December 2016

= = = = =

**I am near to hearing
pain in a flower
silk orchid
black and white photo of a rose.**

12 December 2016

= = = = =

**The essence of a flower
(as in Edward Bach's
or RoseAngelis floral
essences) might really
be a person talking
from their own sense
experience love love
of flowers. And we
may be healed by
all that we hear, or
just thinking about
marigold or hearing
the sound of yarrow.**

12 December 2016

MOIRAE

Out of dawn mist
three girls standing
in the snow.

Respice. Adspice. Prospice.
they were the gods
of the school I went to—
look left, look at,
look right: past
present future knowing.

Three girls know everything.
That is the answer,
where number theory
joins anthropology
and becomes theology.
Graces. Hours. Fates.

Everything known.

12 December 2016

= = = = =

**The luster of memory
is a man about town
checking his address book
never crossing anyone out
not even the ones who said No
and least of all the dead.
The names of the dead
nourish us more than
the breasts of the living.**

12 December 2016

= = = = =

**The snow covered field
is Saraswati's pale back—**

**she embraces earth
to learn its music**

**and teach her own.
The confluence**

**of the two musics
makes language.**

**(11.XII.16)
12 December 2016**

QUESTING, 6

Lift the magic off the meridian
she changed the curriculum
he has to run through panting.
Astronomy is like that,
full of laws, perturbations, sly
unexpeted relaxations. He felt
his head was on a platter
like Saint John, he felt sleepy
as a marshmallow, abandoned
as a rain puddle in New Jersey,
he felt like a frog. Still he did
get through the whole syllabus,
passed all the tests she set,
now stood waiting his turn
at Venus's mahogany desk.
Learning cannot happen in any
other way. You lean on the ecliptic,
dude, you hang with horizons.
But despite this character's close
call with success we haven't
gotten past Mavors yet, whom
ye lastlings call Mars but we
dance up and down three times
in his honor, leaping thus thrice

for his two-breath name, Mavors.
Capisce? as we used to say
on Crescent Stret when the moon
fell silent outside the old men's
Abruzzi Social and Athletic Club.
Why are all drug stores Jewish?
And shouldn't the Pope be Jewish too
considering St. Peter his original?
Grow up — that neighborhood is gone.
Until then he never realized
the need for calculus. Guess
and stretch the cloth, guess again
and fill the glass with cherry pits—
the kilo of black cherries you ate
all by yourself on Montmartre,
saved the pits in your pocket
and called them stones like the Brits.
Remember this carefully. Today
is somewhere else. Here is
passionate Tuesday, sky temporarily
horny with sunshine. Yes, you do
understand the other meaning
of mandolin, thin-sliced cucumber
you dare to paste on the evening sky.

13 December 2016

= = = = =

**Catching up with the god in front
the “ache / in each” Pam Rehm notates—
absence is the song the heart knows best—
winter journey, tunes lost in travel
home to the valley where sun never comes.**

13 December 2016

DANS LE CAFÉ

Listen to her.
You know her not at all—
that makes her accurate,
girl at the next table.
Listen to what she says
cellphone to some friend
smiling the words
into her hand, What
you overhear in a café
is gospel true, *the words*
you hear are meant for you.

“Are you there?” she asks.
You’d better be.
She drinks, you swallow.
She gets up, you sit.
It is perfect. Things
usually are. Everything fits.

13 December 2016
RH @ Rabbit

= = = = =

**The house across the street
from where I sit alone
has been repainted,
a kind of greeny brown
with banana trim.
This is what comes
of being in town alone.
I have to use all these
words to create the soft
silence I really need.**

**13 December 2016
RH @ Rabbit**

= = = = =

**The amber in chamber
glows against the wall
opposed to the window.**

**Sit where I can see you.
Your hair. The chair
painted yellow
(like that Van Gogh
empty bedroom)
long ago looks
golden now. You now.**

**You now. You know
how things have turned
into shadows of us,
thousands of years to
take on our shapes.
I love this room,
it understands my eyes.**

**13 December 2016
RH @ Rabbit**

= = = = =

**Is it the cell
phone vibrating
or a heart attack?
Who would bother
calling a dying man?**

**13 December 2016
RH @ Rabbit**

= = = = =

**(Musicians come in
and settle at the next table.
I suddenly understand)**

**Everything is like a cello,
big, mellow, gorgeous
tone, copious repertory,
awkward, bulky, klutzy,
a pain to travel with,
expensive, fragile.
Everything is frail.**

**13 December 2016
RH @ Rabbit**

= = = = =

Hallway
with day
at one end
night at the other

what an island
to stumble ashore on
from the surf of sleep

pined between times
vivamus mea Lesbia
now I have become
the whole house,
father of my mother, old.

14 December 2016

COMMUNICATING VAJRAS

**All pointed objects
—knives scissors fingers ships—
point in the same direction.
Fact. It is like the compass
before the Chinese or whoever.
The sword points to battle.
The hand points to you.
The ship sails away
into the only direction.**

14 December 2016

= = = = =

**Cold on the sunporch
I throw a blanket
over my bare knees.
The blanket has a map
of the island woves
into the wool, clever.
Now at last I'm somewhere.**

QUESTING, 7

**There are castigations, forced
chastity, shark pools, varicose
highways clotted with carts—
ox, ass, camel, zebu — we live
it turns out by alphabets alone.
Poor Chinese! They're here first,
this Asteroid Belt that buzzes
in my head ow ow like children
running up and down the hall
sunlight at every end of it, I feel
weary with childbirth, woozy,
wonder who I'm supposed to be
today. Cold north wind through
the whole galaxy. Local news,
stolen chariot, unicorns on strike.**

**They tried to sell me: every
asteroid's a letter of an alphabet
the solar system's main task
is to read, align, encode, decipher
bit by bit and inside out and we**

are just along for the ride. *Jamais*
I replied, we come first, we
are the animals of mind, sans us
there'd be nobody to think,
leastways what call thinking.
(Please, and I mean it, please
study Martin Heidegger on this.)

Then there was peace up there
(here) for half an hour (notice
that the Revelator understands
that time is just an aspect of place—
silence in heaven for the space
of half an hour it says in the Book)
so we're in a kind of soft, of trough,
of a watertight canoe, a punt
in the isle of Ely, chapels and spires
point out the necessary constellations
just like on Earth — where you thought
(o faithless ones!) we were all along.

No. we are afloat. *The water of the wise*
(you're familiar with the phrase
and with the blessed juice itself I ween)
sustains the body just as it mires the soul
in unspeakable complexities of joy,
lust and higher mathematics. Return

**now to the mother ship too long
left vacant for the ghosts of nowhere
to play tag in. Return and rev the engines,
the larger asteroids are studying us—
it's time to dine with Uncle Jupiter.**

14 December 2016

QUESTING, 7 ½

It's unlikely for all our words and ways that we'll get much past Saturn. But we'll try. We're not even at the Big One yet.

Remember that when our alphabet was cast in mind, and our language came to be, there was no planet beyond Saturn. That makes it very difficult to *say anything* on or about the new-known planets, Uranus (pronounce as dactyl, please, not amphibrach). Neptune and the much maligned Pluto, not to mention the new-guessed wanderer the newspapers chat about every last Tuesday.

We can learn about them by means of the *teskooano* (what do they call it nowadays?) and mountain mirrors and mathematical jiggery-pokery—but we can't really talk them.

Saturn is the limit of our language. That is the problem.

And Quest, these questings, every question, all questioning, are devoted (if ill-designed) to carry our *ar-*

ticulable cognition further out from the Sun Her Majesty. But do you think She wants us out there? I'm not sure.

I for one am happiest when I can see the shadow she makes of me. See it and follow it all the way home.

14 December 2016

= = = = =

**Change the imagination
already things wait too long
for their ultimate definition.
Me, for instance, as thingly
a person as you'd care to meet—
mostly wood and stone and water,
mostly water, a little electric
current through it now and then
shorts out with a blue flash
we call thinking. All I really
know is that I belong to you.**

15 December 2016

I WANT TO HEAR

**what those girls are saying
the ones playing lawn tennis
in that colorful Signac.
Or those pale sullen ectomorphs
by Schiele, I want to hear
the words those images pronounce—
not the chatter of the human
models on their lawn or dais
but what the paint-thin images themselves
talk about in their long-stretched eternity.
There is no time in there with them
so all their language must be absolute.**

15 December 2016

= = = = =

**Snared by his eyebeams
the mariner sinks to his knees
before the magisterial mirage,
a temple of the rising sun.**

**And as he prays to it, it turns
real as any image ever is—
far, firm, full of color, far,
humming with honest sadness.**

**We live trapped inside
the prison walls of what we see.**

15 December 2016

= = = = =

**Devotion to the undesiring,
such protection!**

**All prayer, all praise,
no bare satisfaction.**

**Ratio of sanity. Daffy
love-like feelings**

**turn out to be the sanest
policy. And you,**

**you're just the city
I live in, you**

don't even know I'm there.

16 December 2016

= = = = =

**Sea bottom
sunken mountains
the luck of water
lifts us dry—**

we are sky,

**live high
over the sea peaks,
we are to fish
what birds are to us.**

16 December 2016

PARIS 2016

**It's always about liberty
but what is that about?
Is it the same as freedom,
freedom from, freedom to?**

**It's always about the benches
in the park, the rats in the sewer
whose incessant passage through
cleans the pipes with their fur.**

**Authorities decided these things,
rats are our friends, what is the link
between authority and freedom.
And where do rats come from?**

**Close the parks, empty the benches,
let no one speak. Rats are relatives,
being mammals, rivals hungry,
determined. A rat has nothing to lose.**

16 December 2016

= = = = =

**The organ grinder
remembers winter.
The saddest song
Schubert wrote,
lone, alone, alone
with the weather
and remember, all
the monkeys are dead
he never had, all
the organ pipes
are cracked, wheeze
of his wounded
bellows. He huddles
in blankets, poor town
in the hills, no need
to remember, winter
is never very far away.**

**16 December 2016
Red Hook**

= = = = =

**We think of things
too late to let them go.**

**Woke up thinking
haddock chowder to cook**

**and how to do it,
step by step the mind rehearses**

**hours later the whole thing
to be done again for the first time.**

17 December 2016

= = = = =

**Leaving a mountain
how to say goodbye**

**or what to wear when
stepping out of your house**

**how long are you gone
you'll never know.**

17 December 2016

ADAMANT

**word of my week
to think and keep,**

**once meant diamond
once meant rock hard
Mohs 10 and the sky even harder,
unbreakable light.**

17 December 2016

= = = = =

**I hope I can har me when I wake—
alternate energies deceive the dark.
You who know my logic know
the other side of anything is right now.**

17.XII.16

ELTHE NUN

Come now! she calls to the goddess
when she needs a friend—
a god by definition is the one you call,
the one who has to come when you call
for that is his nature her nature
because her life-breath is your call?

Not exactly. Her breath
lives in your call. You call
because she is. And because she
like breath by nature is generous.

17 December 2016

= = = = =

**Keeping the mind still
is easy
like tying your dog to a sunbeam.**

17.XII.16

= = = = =

**We wait our turn.
It is an animal
gives us. An animal
lives us.
Pyramid,
a loaf of bread.
Argo, a ship to nowhere.
A paving stone
from Atlantis.**

**Riddle: what lives in the sky
no matter who?
Answer: You are naked
in moonlight. Surprise.**

**Do you come here
every night? Or is it
only the Ocean once more?**

17 December 2016

= = = = =

**The wind comes also in the door
life is a set of variations
on the simplest things — sun, road,
window, hand — all leading to
a stupefying complexity of feelings,
dream, religion, disbelief, poetry.
There is no such thing as simplicity.**

**2.
The Web of Indra tightens
as you grow older. Every
little thing means more and more,
and all the news you hear means you.
Every breath of wind a searching question.**

18 December 2016

= = = = =

**Walk to keep from falling.
Wake to keep from waking.
The liminal, thugh lyrical,
is tragical. Faust rolls
back into adolescence,
a condition far worse than
infancy or adulthood.
His hand reaches out for her
just to touch her once, or one
last time before she vanishes.
Or he does. Who is real
in this fairytale? Walk
to keep from falling. Love
wants you quiet in your place,
needing nothing. Being
awake is love enough for you.**

18 December 2016

= = = = =

**When we sure about daylight
things change. The shadow population
votes on what is real. And don't forget
the more or less furtive animals
busy with Rilke in their own ghost woods.**

**So it's the rational hour again,
the great pretending. To seem in charge
of percept and response! To reason
particulars into generals! Reverse the flow!
We play with chipped marbles and we kill.**

**Still, there is some beauty in this guesswork,
an aspiration, to find God in the clouds
of phenomena. Or be Her if all else fails.**

19 December 2016

= = = = =

Three men who were wise
came from India with frankincense
from Africa with desert myrrh
from rivery Anatolia with gold.
They spoke various languages,
had three at least different
conceptions of the holy
and how to have it, be it, love.
They connected when their travels
converged on the glimmer of a star
new to them — nova or comet
no need to decide. They went together
thereafter, not very far — a star
is closer than you think.

So here they are at the mouth
of a cavern where cattle shelter
and this young girl has come
to be delivered. She lies quiet,
baby beside her, the husband
nervous as we always are
fiddles with straw and towels, rags—
how can anyone really help
at a time like this? One wise man

faltered a word or two in Greek:
we came by star. What star,
the girl wants to know, we saw
no star, she said. How could you
when it is right beside you
another wise man wanted to say
but didn't have the Greek for it,
let alone the Aramaic. He tried
Nabataean: *you are the star*
or he is (pointing at the child).
She smiled as if she understood.

They lingered with the family
a few days, teaching, learning,
talking it over as well as they could.
Then it was time and they left
still arguing, their hands still
fragrant from the gifts they
left behind. Two of them, at least—
the wise man from Anatolia
had only language left to remind.
That gold sustains us still.

19 December 2016

= = = = =

**Music box.
With what for wall?
And roof to open,
whose hands lift
what lid? I am
bothered by the language
of despair. The
no sleep. The
liturgy of hours
with no monks
or nuns to know it.
Say it for me—
sleepless, weary, old.
Sounds like Rossini
too far away.**

20 December 2016

= = = = =

If there were a world
after the window—
but it's past the night,
no cosmos, the base
disorder of the dark.

Dawn lover, newly
arrived — cookies
to keep thought away.
Thinking is no help now,
even less than language.

Hope is a mattress
we toss and turn on.
Despair at least
lets the eyes close.

20 December 2016

= = = = =

More nights than not
we sleep straight
through the slaughter.
Now I am older
than anybody else,
what kind of childhood
lasts so long?

20 December 2016

= = = = =

for Daisy Noe

Someday already begun to begin.
her elegant handwriting,
her face so close to the page —

her poems are like that too,
scrupulous tender attention
to the hard fact of feeling.

20 December 2016

= = = = =

Caritas meant love
before it meant charity
but Latin has no role
in our current design,
our feeble liturgy.
Love has to be artifact,
commodity, like charity
all those begging letters
bulk mailed to nobody
in this season but you
think for one minute
it's meant for you before
you toss the envelope away.
You settle for the women
faces you watch on TV.

20 December 2016

= = = = =

**Exalting, called animal—
no fear of rejection
we are like them too—**

**in Saxon fields
midwinter clover —
in the train station lost and found
nine woolen stocking caps.
One French kepi.**

How?

**Animals bring us to crisis —
automatic eating, killing
for dinner, we never,
crime of a sloppy bucket
full of steamer clams,
one green rubber Wellie
gashed open on one side.**

20 December 2016

= = = = =

ould it be some non-place where Regulus
adjoins Alcyone's field of influence?
Would you even know? So many mistakes
call me their father. No, it's not logical,
just true, The way for example music is,
The Musical Offering more than anything.
Bach means brook in German, small in Welsh.
Fields of force are folded on each other in the sky,
more like topology than Mercator, a crumpled
handkerchief will do, Consider this. We breathe
ur own breath from other people's mouths.

20 December 2016

A HOME FOR DRAGONS

1.

**We have to cancel some things —
the moon regatta, the platonic barbecue,
three small unkempt religions.
Then we'll be all right. Winter
starts today but when will it end
ah! There's the dragon flying over Mead Mountain
coming this way to warm all virgin hearths.
Hearts I mean, why do I get so much wrong?**

2.

**A dragon is a lordly dog,
a cat with wings, a snake with hands,
o he is everything you need
and much you don't think you do.
But dragons know and feed
the deepest needings of all.**

3.

**Mead's because near.
Near because here.
Music has to be somewhere,
can't just float
past me on the waters —
without my being there,
feet steeped in bilge,
a boat or barge
in gilt disguise,
a shivering canoe.**

4.

**Was that a mouse just now
ran across my mind?
I follow him through lucent tunnels
not too deep below the snow
and sun shines on us again,
her everlasting promises.
She's riding a goat today
looks a lot like a dragon.
In India it would be a crocodile
but here thank heaven
the snow keeps them away.**

21 December 2016

= = = = =

Now winter is.
And what to do
make do with this
turn by night by
the disposition of
the flesh inside us,
all of us, the sky
is in our reins
our muscles our
pulse of blood.
Astronomy is
physiology. Now
winter tells us
what we always
forget. There is
no difference, no
space between us.

21 December 2016

= = = = =

The stone the grey
day the tree
kindling light the person
beneath the tree.

It all is religion,
all religions.
Mineral Vegetable
Animal. Each realm
divines us, gods
us, shows us.

But what we see
is so different, each
of us of that same thing.
It could be animal,
fox, coyote, bear,
salmon, hummingbird,
raven. Could
be a stone. Ka'aba.
Grail. *Lapsit Exilit.*
Lia Fáil. Or tree.
He could be tree—
Calvary. Bodh

Gaya. *Etz Hayim*.

**Or listen to the bird.
Take Oðin down from the tree.
Roll away the stone.
Behold the (hu)man.
Ecce Homo**

He is here.

**They call it Christmas
in these parts
of the Galaxy.**

**Or risen from beneath
the tree, *jina*,
the conqueror
of self, of ignorance,
of anger and desire.**

**So many names
for the one
she gives birth to
eon after eon
the glad arrival.**

22 December 2016

= = = = =

**Good. It's like a hymn
time for no church,
a short-breathed
newer testament,
a gasp of glory.**

22 December 2016

= = = = =

**Grey day clear
but it feels like night.
How do the trees
find their way home
every morning without fail?
And the unbearable
patience of a road.
Who comes?**

22 December 2016

= = = = =

**Sometimes I lose count
but someone keeps it.
We call that music
where I come from
and where I'm headed
come spring, come
with me and count the waves,
lose track and talk to me
and they look back,
we'll see the original
accuracy timing us,
for joy or maybe silence
we are part of the equation.**

22 December 2016

THE REPERTORY

is bold, is gold,
is gone mostly
with time, rhyme,
sad old ways
to say, to meet
her once again
across the cloth
field the spine
litany the hand
even, numbers
on all your lips.

22 December 2016

= = = = =

**Keep it simple
the world is terrible
right now.
It always is. It always
is beautiful too.
What can we do.
What can we do?
Instant to instant
do what you can.
The rest is just pain
you haven't felt yet
or that just let up.
What they call history.**

22 December 2016

SHOSTAKOVICH'S EIGHTH PRELUDE AND FUGUE

Where are we going
after we have arrived?
No journey ends when
we get where we're going,
the going is never gone
Listen to me. It comes
again and again, the place
we thought we passed
through on our way from
the place we thought
was ours or at least where
we thought we were to
this place, this legendary
here priests and music
talk about all the time,
all the time. The blood
still flows, the breath
rehearses those ancient
excuses we call words.
The least we can do now,
touch fingers, say hello.

22 December 2016

= = = = =

fits your face
precisely. Flesh
rushes to attend.
There is no space
at all between
you are and
you seem, you
who *meditate*
in alterity
let yourself
become who
you really are.

23 December 2016

= = = = =

**Oldest dream of magic
a candle
with remote control**

23.XII.16

= = = = =

**Watch out for those
for whom your own
door seems already
open when you meet.
Prefer those who knock
before they come in.**

23 December 2016

= = = = =

If you're after inspiration
don't look at me
I'm just here for the trees,
dancing girls the dragonflies,
the southpaw pitchers,
Verdi operas the Louvre
the alphabet the toy floor
at Macy's World War II
the apocalypse. I'm
just looking for it too,
hands in my pocket,
chewing on a chunk
of frankincense, after
a while it chews just
like chewing gum.

23 December 2016

SHOSTAKOVICH, 9TH & 10TH PRELUDE & FUGUE

We were going to the city anyhow
carrying the piano on our backs,
green fields of the Coromandel Peninsula
strict horizon on our minds: *Sound
like this*, we told our music, sound
like sun forgiving earth at least some
of its long arcane transgressions—books
know nothing of the real sins. Bells
were ringing now, as if geology were also
trying to communicate, gravity, tide
of bronze, sway of clapper, we are in fact
a kind of church, stave style, old Norse,
questionable orthodoxy, our dearest
Frigga waits for us in the spruces,
pretending to choose a Christmas tree.
This piano on my back is what she
gives me with a kiss to carry home.

23 December 2016

ARS POETICA

Formal as a mountain
leafy as an essay by Emerson,
—note hiatus between -y and E-,
that's how poetry gets made
or scrimshaw or guessing
if and how much it will rain today,
formal, hopeful, imprecise.

I fear I'm not making myself clear
altogether. There is a water
flows between Europe and Asia,
another sort of hiatus, any decent
hero tries to swim it, most succeed
and we hear no more of them—
a few drown along the way and they
are the voices we listen to so
carefully in our body's flesh and mind
when we write (the word means scratch)
a poem (means anything that's made).

23 December 2016

NON SUM DIGNUS

**I am not worthy
to enter into the contract,
the contact
with the holy flesh
of everybody,
anybody. We
are movable temples
each of us, own religion,
and though we claim
that god is One
we are various,
shift dogmas by how
the light falls, shadows,
breezes, we pray
by what we want.**

24 December 2016

OF THE KORE

Blossoming mead
the blue

no better
name than
her flowers,

she who plucked one
to open up
the gates of earth,
down where the unborn
masquerade as the dead
and she by arts
she learned from flowers
knows
how to mother them to life.

24 December 2016

= = = = =

After the carol singing
got to talk about blue
hydrangeas with
Rosalind's daughter who
really knew. Nitrogen
fixing. Yes, aluminum
sulfate will do that.
Make blue. Painted
women running over
the hills. People
steal flowers she
told me, feel privileged,
,earth gives flowers,
earth gives them hands.
Sometimes a garden
puts the sun on trial
for her life. Love
this place. Love it
to life for us all.

24 December 2016

A FEW CHRISTMAS PRESENTS

for Charlotte

You like light
so let me give you all the light I have.
You like the woods
so here are the rainforests of Brazil
complete with ancient cities' traces
stone roads and marble altars.
You like music, so here's
a romantic opera called *Our Life Together
Forever*, but you love the baroque too, and Bach
so here's a new Bach Cantata,
Das Dasein Christi lebt in Liebe just for you
for the fifth Sunday in Advent,
the lost tribe of Ireland.
You love birds so here's the best I can do,
thirty chickadees in flight formation
with two male cardinals leading the way.
But mostly you love the sea
and that's where I'm in trouble I love
it so much too, so here's what I'll do:
I give you hereby the whole Atlantic Ocean

**and keep for me only that mild
stretch of the Gulf of Mexico where once
we sat and watched a pelican
think about things a long time
before it finally knew, and flew away.**

24 December 2016

= = = = =

Asperges me hyssopo et dealbabor

Liturgy surfaces

like ground water

always there,

nourishing, reminding,

shaping the rhythms

of how we say we think—

maybe that's the real

gift of any religion—

comes through the dry night,

and look at sunshine, and still

from somewhere nowhere comes

you sprinkle me with hyssop

and I become whiter

than this pretty snow,

cleaner than what I see.

I stand where I am

and something happens to me

that is the giving of words

to be spoken by anybody,

healed by their happening,

everything possible again.

And what is hyssop anyhow?

25 December 2016

TO OLDER MEN, ABOUT YOUNG WOMEN

**Never confuse
their Occasional Spontaneous
Angelic Visitation
with your own sentimental crush.**

**They come by and bring
unconditional units of delight
and then they're gone.
Don't try to hold on.**

Don't clutch. Don't crush.

25 December 2016

= = = = =

Under the windows
a person.
Now delete person
what light is left?

Mandate the power
in uncut lavender,
no, I mean destiny
led me come crawling.

Calling to you.
Let me be,
all I remember of other
will still be me.

25 December 2016
[zettelwek]

= = = = =

**At the very boundary
of existence
a will to meet the other
A wall with a gate.
Watchman asleep on the roof.**

25 December 2016

= = = = =

Writing into the glare
skier speeding uphill—

in this place, everything
knows us. It is called
language and it hurts

sometimes, and is bright
opaque, smells like amber

tastes like air but air
from the tomb of Abraham,
the last man not to see G-d.

26 December 2016

= = = = =

Things getting harder as we speak
trees in uniform
voices lost in storm

threnody for the Red
Army Chorus in the Black Sea fallen
proud humility of soldiers
singing someone else's song
to make it theirs
by men aloud.

Things hard enough to begin with,
the silences of bombed cities
the clamor of refugees
give me place give me place
to grieve in or be sick or die
the sudden silence of the dead

o sweet desire come lick away anger
while we still have the sea.

26 December 2016

PICKEREL WEED

**pond unfrozen
the chosen word,
any word is like a book,
falls open, look and read.
Forward and back
and rearrange the little bits
like characters in a story
until you know everything.**

**A true thing knows how to sing.
A word is like a human sacrifice
heart held up to heaven
but beats on forever. The victim
is the priest, we survive
our sanctity.**

**Our pond next door
explained all this to me
when I asked about the word,
the water, the beaver at the orchard end.**

26 December 2016

= = = = =

Life is clumsy
enough to go on
the miracles
come later
after you've forgotten
their names,
Christmas always
when you least expect it.
Look the other way
a minute and he's here
suddenly behind you
born full grown.
Nothing for you to do
but be, here, be
like him, absolute.

26 December 2016

FRIED NOISE

**Don't wear your bikini to church
elementary politesse
when you visit the rabbi
don't bring your pet pig
don't sing your latest hit to the deaf.
Have some sense
who you are
depends on who they are.
It's a little like compassion
you have no self but what you give.**

26 December 2016

= = = = =

**Alarmist miracles
here or there
grass showing through the snow**

**andbirds are easily pleased
come and eat seeds
are pretty as can be
even when they fly away**

**if only it weren't for that
divorce lawyer called Time
how easy happy would be.**

27 December 2016

= = = = =

**Do I have to start
this life again?
The dark contradictions
of this village school
the earth, the barefoot
schoolmaster rattles
his keys, any
moment opens the door.
It is the strange place
where in and out are the same.**

27 December 2016

ADVICE TO THE NEWBORN

**No rancor.
Just remember.**

27.XII.16

ITHE SCAR

Exelaunei,
the army marched
and still is marching,

all those parasangs
foreign measures
into unknown languages

unclean, unclean

car tail lights vanishing
into the woods on a dirt track

1916 the Emperor is dead
a scar is left
the scar cannot heal.

2.
Sorrow of it,
a nation scattered
into money fiefs,
Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon,
Dakota, Virginia,

Wallonia, Deseret,
strip of holy Mormon land
all the way to Santa Monica,

the emperor is dead,
you called that war a scar,
the real war—

the car will not heal.

3.
I loved you when you said that,
my hands reached out for your hips
to right myself by contact
with the royal pharaonic balance,
Judgment on her throne,
the curvature of woman
rebuking the curvature of earth
so that we can stand,
we can live.

But I pulled back,
I have no right to that coastline,
the ripe permission, the truth.
Your lion roared to warn me
I had just barely understood.
My hands clutched air instead,
caressed the air, sleek and deep.

The scar will not heal.

4.

**Music stopped then.
All the lovely painted
nudes fell off the wall.**

**Will I still be here
at breakfast,
will the morning let me,**

**and she who rules the dark,
can I coax her
to speak into my dreams
so the night finally makes sense?**

5.

**This is not the same
as saying something.**

***Wind like a wound*
moves through our meanings,**

**the banks and bourses,
my hammer rusty**

hangs from its rusty nail.
The Emperor is dead.
Her voice over the phone
the soul is broken
and the waltz is dead.
Only we are left.

I loved you then
when you remembered
who you were.
Now help me remember who I am.

28 December 2016

= = = = =

**Why not the child's
delight at waking
to snow? Why not
every obstacle
a thing to play with,
roll in, ski down,
shape evanescent
incarnations of
art in the round?
It snowed once
in Florence and men
with brooms swept
a courtyard-full
into a nice heap
and Michelangelo
that morose introvert
went out to play with it.**

29 December 2016

= = = = =

**The morning mind
works slow and kind**

**tends to forgive
the bad dreams
that brought us here**

**all of us, we're all
the same person**

**when we wake up.
Try to believe me,**

it's your only chance.

29 December 2016

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**On Samothrace they had three gods
or who knows what they were**

**hooded figures whose names some know—
any name soon bcomes a god**

**when we say it often enough, call her name
over and over, cry it into the forest**

**where she never walked, shout it,
maybe she'll hear you in her part of heaven.**

**Language us a drunken lover
crying for a lost love in the night.**

29 December 2016

= = = = =

**And if Baldur grew old
what happened to us?**

**When a god dies
he doesn't stop living,
he goes on into human form
breathing now, not thinking,**

**he ages, sickens, dies again.
The twice-dead come again**

**when the world begins again,
when someone calls his name**

**and a young virgin listens.
Die over and over until you are you.**

、

29 December 2016

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So while I was waiting
for the beginning to begin
I saw a tiger carrying a chalice
and a lady with a mandolin
coaxing it to sing,
 what music
rose from such setting!

Everything happens in multiples
of three, we need your voice
to inflect its growl with meaning.
You and the tiger and the gold
ringing in the chalice wherein
some curious fluid sloshes
pleasantly from side to side
like the blood in clean arteries
or the waves lapping up Rockaway.

30 December 2016

CRAQUELURE

they call it
patterning of tiny
cracks in the porcelain

where the real
is revealed by close study,
the true meaning of the vessel

read the lines
in my palm, the creases
in my brow, explain what I'm for.

30 December 2016

Beware a smooth man who has no meaning yet

= = = = =

Not sure how much of me
to explain.

Certainly not the brain,
maybe the left hand,
the one that receives
without reaching out.
Yes, that's what it should be,

the kabbalah of being
in a body (*kabbalah* means
reception, not transmission),
take only what you are given
but study it so long and deep
the stars shine in the palm of
even my right hand, here
 let me touch thee,
 for if I but touch thy knee
 thou shalt walk in the sky.

30 December 2016

= = = = =

**Given the right side of the street
you'd get there in no time
but I am puzzled by the whiteness
of society, of snow. What
does it mean, all the bright sameness?**

30 December 2016

= = = = =

**When I want to make a mark
I use the sky, room up there
for almost all I have to say.
And for the rest of it
there's night. Night!**

30 December 2016

= = = = =

The day clear
trees are lace
indecipherable overlays—

but someone must
be able to read them,
sight-reading the unwritten—

isn't that our first obligation?

30 December 2016

YEAR'S LAST DAY

Elle sait ce qui plaît
she's waiting in the woods
to rise at our call
phôs, phôs augei!
over the orchard
across the stream
over the hill
that hides me here,
I borrow Louis' cries:
Arise, arise!
as if she were the whole
proletariat of
the earth we are,
or *Come!* you
from whom we come.

31 December 2016

= = = = =

Language scatters like blackbirds
at a gunshot. It is the sun
thinking to come up
out of the trees and we
hear her thinking of us
waking, wording, getting it
miraculously wrong.

31 December 2016

Das Sein

**I will wake up and feed the crows.
It is what corn is good for,
and waking up, and walking out
and being somebody on earth.
Giving is being forgiven
from the strangeness of being.**

31 December 2016

FUNCTIONAL NEUROANATOMY

Old time masters
of a broken book
pilfer wisdom
from a cup of tea

but we need to scar
the moment's
consciousness with
ayahuasca to get

a whiff of how things
really are. Everything
gouges the mind,
grooves and gravings,

thdeep and shallow
sulcas of time in us,
the poor organ
that plays us limb by limb

to fit the facts, those
kittens in the head
never wuiet for a moment.,
never where you need them.

**I'm not complaining,
not explaining, just here
for the music, banjo,
sitar, philharmonic
to pluck the marrow
from my moans.
Music means. Words
are hard as the frozen
earth beneath the house
where only love alone
lets anything live.**

31 December 2016

= = = = =

**Incandescent ninja OK
flickers by — sedge of the pond
corner of the eye**

**Light also is a kind of thief
but all things also are,
seize self from me**

**and leave me nude awareness.
O steal these thoughts
from me again!**

31 December 2016

= = = = =

**Don't look back on the other side of anything
where its maker's mark and land of origin
in tiny letters remind you how far away
they are from you and by extension you are
from yourself, o poor Atlantean in Noboland
among the white Presbyterian bourgeoisie
and nothing for breakfast again but eggs
(sound like agues) and you hate chicken.
One after another the truths troop in, one
worse than the one before it. Birth, sickness,
old age, death. No, that's a different liturgy,
I mean the rat-faced sequence Mon-Tues-
Wed et cetera, a dolor a day to keep
enstasy away, the sweet condition of being
and being you and no measure, no need
to look outside the mind, the mind see
everything away, so relax, rebel, relax.**

31 December 2016

TEN A.M.

**Eventide looks like
to the eye, I think
like a fireplace
more heat than light.**

**She who understands
these things sleeps.**

**2.
Bracketed anxiety
insecurity masked
in carnival guises:
poetry.**

**3.
Believe each little
accident: it is things
talking to you, telling
you what only they
and Yama know, or who
is that Egyptian girl
holds a mirror up to you
that shows you everything
you ever did or were?**

4.

Things know.

That's why we chose
(I chose) to be born
in a thingly world,
to care for them,
hoarding, sharing even
sometimes, on sunny
afternoons and in
war's disasters,
a word that itself
means bad stars.

As if the fault were theirs—
but they are never wrong,
they sleep and wait and think.

5.

Hylonoetic I've been calling it
these days, consciousness active in matter.
Matter being everything that isn't us. Me.
You. The noisy golden deceiver
down the street, pigeons on the roof,
germs in my tooth brush. Us.
Matter is everything else. And thinks.

6.

Hence my continual clamor
to each and every thing.
If they can think they can hear
if they can hear they can speak.
Hence my life of joyous listening.
Stone. Shovel — blade and handle.
Dust. Thread off an old sweater
unraveling with eagerness. Thread
lying on the carpet, patient to be heard.
Then there was that strange hank
of dark grey woolen yarn I found
in a room where no one ever knitted.
I hold it in my mind's hands now
and wait. What a story it will tell,
old fingers, plump young arms. No.
A story has nothing to do with us.

7.

And that's the mystery of narrative —
all those epics, romances, chansons,
they are all about the space of world,
the spaces and what they make happen.
And we're just accidents along their way,
warriors, princesses, sleeping on our way to Troy.